233.38
B87

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION LIBRARY
BERKELEY, CA 94709

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/dateofcrucifixio0000revw

R-5

THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION

RAMONA CONVENT

Rev. W. A. BULBECK, O.S.B.

From Ls M Katharine
Ramona Convent
Alhambra Cal
Of interest?

ERRATUM

Page 20, line 27, *for* 325 *read* 328.

The Date of the Crucifixion

Founded on the Kalendar of the Ancient Egyptians

By the
Rev. W. A. BULBECK, O.S.B.

London
ART AND BOOK COMPANY
22 Paternoster Row, E.C.
—
1902

52922

THE ARGUMENT

THE present small pamphlet has been drawn up in the hope of settling a long lived difficulty.

It deals first with Daniel IX and Ezra VII, and shows that Daniel's prophecy of the seventy Weeks is to be reckoned from the autumn after the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, mentioned by Ezra: that is from the autumn of B.C. 458. The time of the prophecy to the middle of the seventieth Week, when the sacrifice ceased to be acceptable through the sacrifice of the Cross, was 486½ years, and 486½ years from the autumn of B.C. 458 brings us to the spring of A.D. 30.

Secondly, the 25th of Phamenoth, mentioned by Clement of Alexandria as the day of the crucifixion, is proved to be April 7, A.D. 30. And these two conclusions are in evident agreement.

Again, Beza and other writers down to our own times, owing to the odd notion that the Pasch was calculated from the first new moon of the spring, have placed the Pasch on Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, and thus have been obliged to maintain that the Crucifixion happened on the

same day as the Pasch itself, or else that the Jews had made a blunder in their calculations. It is evident that, though the process was faulty, it would necessarily give either the right day for the Crucifixion, or at least one very near to it, and also to the Pasch.

The Egyptian Kalendar

The date of Christ's death is so dependent on the ancient Egyptian Kalendar that, unless this be understood, we cannot make any progress towards determining the time of that event. As there seems to be no work on the subject, and as there is no article treating of it, even in the Encyclopædia Britannica, it will not be considered out of place to attempt to supply the omission at least in as brief a form as possible.

At an early period in the history of Egypt there was a natural desire to have the seasons of the year properly marked out for theoretical as well as for practical purposes. It was noticed that the moon passed through her course in about thirty days and that the sun passed through the seasons in a dozen of these courses. From this there arose a simple scheme that would have satisfied every wish, if the sun and moon had condescended to accommodate themselves to the arrangement.

It was determined that a year should consist of 360 days divided into twelve months of thirty days each. Further, it was arranged that

thirty of these years should constitute a period or month of years, answering somewhat to our half jubilee. How long this scheme lasted is quite unknown, but it seems to have been adopted by the Arabians and is kept up even to the present day by the Turks, though it causes their New Year's Day to fall back through all the seasons of the year—Winter, Autumn, Summer and Spring—in less than eighty of our years.

The ancient Egyptians were too wise to submit always to such an absurd system as this. They therefore watched all the signs that seemed likely to be of service in their investigations. It was noticed that the river Nile was accustomed to change for its rise about the time when the sun was at its highest point, and that the Dog-star, which gives its name to our dog-days, and which is otherwise called Sirius or the Sothic star, rose heliacally, that is, just before the sun every summer.

In the year B.C. 2782, it was decreed that an all-important change in the Kalendar was to be inaugurated about midsummer. Pharaoh and his learned men watched the variations of the Nile, and rose early in the morning to look for the rising of the Dog-star. For some days they had been measuring the length of the shadow of the sun on the level, and its depth on

perpendicular walls and down wells, and at last all were confident that midsummer day had arrived, if not passed, and lo ! the Sothic star shone out before the sun, just as had been expected.

His Majesty doubtless made an eloquent harangue on an occasion of such far-reaching importance. There was perhaps no reporter present to take down his brilliant oration, but the import of it was that they had made mistakes hitherto about the length and right beginning of a year, but that at last all had been discovered. This glorious day was to be the commencement not only of the coming year, but of a truly astronomical period.

For the future the year was to consist of twelve months of thirty days each, to which five days, called Epacts or Epagomenæ, were to be added to complete the required number. The year was to contain three seasons, each embracing four months, namely, the Wet season, the Green and the Dry.

They were still to continue the Great Month of thirty years, also to add the Great Season of four Great Months (equal to 120 years) and the Great Year of 365 ordinary years, four of which Great years formed a Sothic Cycle. The Turks were unable to adopt these two last periods, as there were not 365 nor even 120 years in their whole Cycle.

The heliacal rising of Sirius in B.C. 2782 has been calculated by the French astronomer Biot and found to have taken place on July 20, Julian, in that year.

It is now known that a mean year does not contain exactly 365, but more nearly 365¼ days. This causes the Egyptian New Year's Day to fall back a whole day every four years. Thus four years after B.C. 2782, namely, in 2778, New Year's Day (or Thoth 1, as it is called) fell on July 19 instead of July 20.

Hence it follows that New Year's Day will pass back over the 365 days of the Egyptian Kalendar, in four times 365 Julian years, after which it will fall on Thoth 1 in (2782 minus 1460, that is in) B.C. 1322 towards midsummer.

This will readily be seen to be 1,461 Egyptian years. Consequently, 1,461 times 365 days (an Egyptian year) ought to be the same as 1,460 times 365¼ days (a Julian year); multiplying them together, the result in both cases will be found to be 533,265 days.

Astronomers assure us that a true or Gregorian mean year is less than 365¼ mean days by about 11⅛ minutes; and this, it will be found, amounts to a whole day in 130 years. Again, 130 years will divide into 1,460 years 11 times, causing 11 days to be absorbed in a Cycle of 1,460 Julian years.

This leads to the method of correcting dates in the Julian, Russian or Old Style. At present we have to subtract 13 days from Russian dates to reduce them to the New Style, thus, January 14, 1901, Old Style, was reckoned by us as January 1.

To find the Gregorian or true position of July 20, B.C. 2782, we have to divide its distance from the Council of Nice by 130, according to the Gregorian settlement of A.D. 1582. The quotient gives the number of days to be subtracted from July 20, B.C. 2782. Thus, 2,782 plus A.D. 325 (which is the date of the council) gives 3,107, and this divided by 130 makes 23 with a remainder. Subtracting this 23 from July 20, B.C. 2782, we learn that June 27 is the day required.

By the same method we can show that July 20, B.C. 1322, is the same day as the Gregorian July 8, B.C. 1322. This is eleven days after the corresponding June 27 of B.C. 2782, as suggested above.

This may perhaps be made plainer in the following manner. A Gregorian year is about eleven minutes shorter than a Julian year. Therefore, a Gregorian day is shorter than a Julian day. Consequently, 1,460 Julian years will contain a greater number of Gregorian days than of Julian. The excess is eleven days. Hence,

when Thoth 1 passes back along the list of Julian days, it will reach July 20, but will not reach June 27 on the Gregorian list of days, but will stop short of it by eleven days, that is, it will reach July 8 as above.

Biot proves that by a curious accident, the Sothic or star year was also 11¼ minutes shorter than a true year. The consequence was, that the heliacal rise of the Dog-star always fell on July 20 Julian, every summer, and this continued for more than 2,500 years.

Oppolzer, the German astronomer, proves that the Dog-star did not begin to fall on July 20 Julian, till *after* B.C. 3000; which shows that if, as some suppose, an Egyptian Cycle had been introduced before 3000 B.C., it could not have been a Sothic Cycle.

Biot tells us that the Sothic star began to go wrong, through the precession of the equinoxes, in the time of the Greek Pharaohs, and that in B.C. 275 there were twenty-four days between the summer solstice and the rise of the Sothic star. However, the authorities wisely continued the reckoning of the Kalendar, as if the star had risen heliacally as before.*

* These statements of Biot and Oppolzer are borrowed from Norman Lockyer's "Dawn of Astronomy."

The Egyptian months are as follows:

SEASON I.—Thoth, 1; Paophi, 2; Athyr, 3; Khoiak, 4.
SEASON II.—Tybi, 5; Mechir, 6; Phamenoth, 7; Pharmuthi, 8.
SEASON III.—Pakhons, 9; Payni, 10; Epiphi, 11; Mesore, 12; and five epacts.

It took 500 years for New Year's Day to pass back through the five epacts and Season III; 480 years to pass through Season II; and 480 years through Season I; making in all 1460 years.

The years proceed in the following way:

	B.C.	JULIAN	GREGORIAN
1. Thoth 1	2782	... July 20	... June 27
2. Thoth 1	2781	... July 19	... June 26
3. Thoth 1	2780	... July 19	... June 26
4. Thoth 1	2779	... July 19	... June 26
5. Epact 5	2778	... July 19	... June 26
6. Epact 5	2777	... July 18	... June 25
7. Epact 5	2776	... July 18	... June 25
8. Epact 5	2775	... July 18	... June 25
*	*	*	*
25. Mesore	2758	... July 14	... June 21

and so on.

It will at first sight seem strange that the second year should begin with July 19 Julian, and with June 26 Gregorian, instead of July 20 and June 27. This is owing to the fact that B.C.

2781 is a leap-year, and that the leap-day falls in the previous February. N.B.—The leap-years B.C. (like B.C. 1), leave the remainder one, when divided by four, and always falls on the second year of the Egyptian quadriennium.

The Egyptians are supposed to have made their astronomical observations in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, as ours are made at Greenwich, and would have differed greatly from those taken at some other parts of Egypt.

Who the Pharaoh was that introduced this Kalendar is quite unknown. If we can trust the dates of Flinders Petrie, it must have been Sank-ha-ra of the 11th dynasty, but it is more like what his vigorous successor, Amen-em-hat of the 12th, would have accomplished.

If the beginning of a new century has been so interesting to us, what must have been the excitement of the Egyptians at the commencement of a period that was to last for 1,461 of their years?

It may be asked why the learned Egyptians did not begin their first year on midsummer-day itself instead of waiting till the third day after. It was because Sirius was a very splendid star, and was sufficiently near the summer solstice for their purpose.

We can now form the following table to

show the connection between the Roman and Gregorian styles at the beginning of each Sothic Cycle :

The Sothic Cycles

	Julian			Gregorian
I.	July 20, B.C. 2782	...	...	June 27, B.C. 2782
II.	July 20, B.C. 1322	...	...	July 8, B.C. 1322
III.	July 20, A.D. 139	...	...	July 19, A.D. 139
IV.	July 20, A.D. 1599	...	...	July 10, A.D. 1599

From this it will be seen that we are now not long after the 300th year of the fourth Sothic Cycle.

At first sight it will seem that the last line is incorrect, because there are not 11 days between the two last Gregorian lines, as there are in the case of the other lines. But no ; it is not inaccurate. To find the Gregorian correction for July 20, 1599, we have to subtract 10 from it, namely, the 10 days that were deducted at the Gregorian Reformation in that century. Besides these 10, there was another extra day between A.D. 139 and the Council of Nice, which with the 10 will make up the 11 days required.

While the authorities were introducing this Reform of the Kalendar, in 1582, it was a pity they did not take the Nativity of our Lord as the centre of time instead of the Council of Nice.

This would have been effected by subtracting 12 days instead of 10 from the year.

The use of the Sothic Cycles lasted for fully 3,000 years, if we include the time after Christ in which they were still employed by the learned.

The Emperor Augustus required the Egyptians to regard the Roman Kalendar as the acme of perfection with its barbarous Nones, Ides and Kalends, and with its months formed without regard to common sense or symmetry. If instead of this folly he had adopted the Egyptian system in its integrity, at least for legal purposes, we should be now enjoying a scheme extending back for a period of nigh 5,000 years. A farmer's or weather almanac would have been needed in connection with it, but this might have been modified and corrected from time to time according to the demands of science, whilst the Egyptian scheme continued its course as smoothly as the Dog-star does in the firmament of heaven. The conception is worthy of the country that raised the pyramids and built the mighty temples of Dendera and Karnac.

It is a mistake to suppose with some writers that the five extra days or Epacts were introduced at a later day than the beginning of the first Cycle, as the intrusion of a single day would have made the above correspondences impos-

sible. Add or withdraw a day anywhere in the first Cycle, and Thoth 1 would not have fallen on July 20 afterwards.

That we are not indulging in mere speculation will be clear from the following facts taken from Palmer's "Egyptian Chronicles," p. 693, etc.:

The inscription on the coffin of Rameses II in the Bulaq Museum states that the mummy was removed "in the 16th year, the 4th month of the season Pirt, the 7th day."

Herodotus and other ancient writers distinctly state that an Egyptian civil year consisted of 365 days.

Strabo, who was in Egypt B.C. 20, writes: "As some portion of a day over-runs after the end of the *civil*, and is still needed to complete the *true* year, they contrive a certain period consisting of whole days and whole years—that is, of 4 years and 1,461 days."

Vettius Valens (under the Antonines) says: "The Egyptians begin their year on the 1st of Thoth, and their *natural* year at the heliacal rising of the Dog-star."

Georgius Syncellus states from Manetho that "the Shepherd Kings seized the throne of the Pharaohs in the 701st year of the Cycle," namely in (2782 minus 700 =) 2082 B.C. Petrie, by a rough calculation, makes it B.C. 2098, which differs from it by only sixteen years.

Clement of Alexandria (Str. i, 21, 36) informs us that Amosis expelled the Shepherds in the 345th year before the lapse of the Sothic Cycle, that is, in (1322 plus 345 =) 1667 B.C." Petrie, however, places that event in 1587, the one date perhaps giving the beginning and the other the end of the struggle, which, Petrie says, was "a long and mighty war."

The well-known inscription of Chnoum-Hotep, in the reign of Usertesen II, states that "he made oblations on all the festivals of the dead, namely, on those of the New Year; on the rise of the Solar Year; of the Great Year; of the Little Year; of the Year's End; of the Great Panegyry; of the Great Heat; of the Little Heat; of the 5 Epagomenæ; that of the Sheteta; the 12 month festivals; and, lastly, all the commencement festivals of the Plain and the Hill." A goodly number, these!

If the "Great Year" here means the period of 365 ordinary years mentioned above, it will not be difficult to discover the date of Chnoum-Hotep and of his King Usertesen II, namely, at (2782 minus 365 =) B.C. 2417, instead of 2680 suggested by Petrie.

The ancient Armenian version of Manetho—or, rather, of Eusebius—tells us that the Exodus of the Bible took place in the reign of the mighty builder, Amenophis III. This will suit

about B.C. 1380, and points to Neferu-Ra as the Pharoah's daughter that found Moses in the Nile. She was the unmarried child of the illustrious Queen Hat-shep-sut and niece of the mighty Thothmes III. Josephus calls her Thermuthis, which looks somewhat like a feminine form of Thothmes; but no such name has been found on the monuments. Petrie gives her portrait in his "History of Egypt," II, p. 77.

Besides the Sothic Cycle the ancient Egyptians were conversant with another Cycle connected with it, which always began with the same day of the natural year, that is, on the third day after midsummer.

We have seen that 1,460 Julian years equalled 1,461 Egyptian years. Add 45 Julian years to the former and 45 Egyptian years to the latter, then the two sums will not be equal on account of the 11 leap-days that are in the former and not in the latter. Forty-five years after 1322 is 1277 B.C., making in the new or Phœnix Cycle 1,505 Julian years and 1,506 Egyptian. Taking 11 days from July 20, 1277, we shall have July 9, 1277, and this ought to be the same as June 27, 1277, Gregorian. On multiplying the Egyptian year 365 by 1,506 and the Gregorian year 365·2422 days by 1,505, we find the same number of days within a fraction—namely, 549,690.

The following Table will show the connection between the Julian style and the Gregorian in what is called :

The Phœnix Cycle

Julian.			Gregorian.
I. July 20, B.C. 2782	...	...	June 27, B.C. 2782
II. July 9, B.C. 1277	...	...	June 27, B.C. 1277
III. June 27, A.D. 227	...	...	June 27, A.D. 227
IV. July 8, A.D. 1732	...	...	June 27, A.D. 1732

It will seem strange that July 9 and July 8, in the second and fourth lines, are so nearly equal. This is owing to the fact that they are nearly equally distant before and after the Council of Nice.

In dividing the Cycle 1505 by 130 (the leap-day period) the quotient is about $11\frac{1}{2}$. This taken from the first line will give more correctly $8\frac{1}{2}$ than July 9 in the second line and $11\frac{1}{2}$ from July $8\frac{1}{2}$ rightly gives June 27 in the third line.

To find the Gregorian correction for July 8, A.D. 1732, in the last line we have to subtract 11 days, just as was done by the English Parliament in 1752 of the same century.*

* It is not generally known that the New Style was introduced into England with the secret assistance of Dr Charles Walmesley, O.S.B., a distinguished mathematician of the Sorbonne, who made some discovery in connection with the libration of the moon. He was made in 1756 V.A. of the Western District of England, and his

The Phœnix or Bennou, as the Egyptians called it, was the Benno, a kind of white crane, distinguished by a couple of feathers streaming back from the head, and often represented on the monuments. The Benno (Ardea Bubulcus) perhaps migrated to the Delta about midsummer.

The old Phœnix Cycle died in the midst of the fiery heats of an Egyptian midsummer, and immediately out of its ashes arose another Cycle in all the freshness and glory of youth.

Tacitus remarks (Ann. vi, 28) that there were various traditions concerning these Cycles, some authors maintaining that they consisted of 500 years and others of 1,461. Like most Romans he did not really understand the subject at all.

Censorinus, after remarking that "the great or canicular year begins when the heliacal rising of Sirius occurs on the 1st or movable Thoth," adds that when he was writing, in A.D. 238, Thoth 1 was on June 25; and 99 years earlier, in the consulship of Antonius and Bruttius, A.D. 139, it was at July 20.

This passage has enabled us to reconstruct the Egyptian Kalendar; seeing that 1,460 years

valuable library at Bath was pillaged and burnt in 1780 by a "no-popery" mob. A volume (or two) that escaped destruction is now in the library of Downside Abbey. He died in 1797.

before A.D. 139 fixes the beginning of the previous Cycle at B.C. 1322, and 1,460 years before that date gives B.C. 2782 for the first Cycle.

Some years ago a monument of Thothmes III was found that gave Epiphi 28 as the day on which Sirius rose just before the sun. By calculating backwards Mahler, an astronomer of Vienna, found that this suited July 20 in B.C. 1470, or in any year of the quadriennium, the lunar intimations fixing it in 1470 itself.

From the above theory we are able to obtain the same result by a simple process of arithmetic. Thus, Epiphi is the 11th month of the Egyptian year. Therefore, 28th Epiphi will be 10 times 30 plus 28, or the 328th day of the Egyptian year. As each day represents a quadriennium, or 4 years, 328 days will represent 4 times 328, that is, 1,312 years from the beginning of the Cycle; and 1,312 years from B.C. 2782 gives B.C. 1470, the same year as calculated by Mahler. It so happens that the Egyptians registered the heliacal rising of Sirius on the first year of their quadriennium, and not on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th.

The same result may also be deduced from the end of the Cycle in B.C. 1322. Thus, the above 325 from 365 days leaves 37, and 4 times 37 produces 148, which is to be—not subtracted from—but *added* to 1322, and gives 1470 as before.

From this B.C. 1470, Petrie calculates the dates for the discoveries that have been made since that time.

The same plan may be practised on the following cases propounded by Petrie. See his "History of Egypt," II, p. 32.

9. Epiphi ...	Amenophis I	...	B.C. 1546
14. Epiphi ...	Thothmes I	...	B.C. 1526
21. Epiphi ...	Hat-shep-sut	...	B.C. 1498
7. Mesore ...	Amenophis II	...	B.C. 1434
14. Mesore ...	Amenophis II	...	B.C. 1406
28. Mesore ...	Tut-ankh-amen	...	B.C. 1350
22. Thoth ...	Rameses II	...	B.C. 1234
29. Thoth ...	Merenptah	...	B.C. 1206

The month Thoth in the two last cases shows that we are in the second Cycle. Multiply the 22 of Rameses by 4, and we have 88. This 88 must be subtracted, not from 2782, but from B.C. 1322, which gives B.C. 1234, precisely as in Petrie's list. As the year of the king's reign is sometimes given, we are able to determine the time at which he mounted the throne.

It is only a few years ago that we were unable to guess with any probability when these various monarchs existed.

Before these discoveries we possessed the wonderful Regal Canon of Claudius Ptolemy, which presents a long list of sovereigns with the

Egyptian Thoth 1 of the year previous to their ascension. He avoided giving the actual days on which they ascended the throne, as scribes were prone to copy them incorrectly.

The Egyptian Cycle was introduced into Asia by Nabonassar (the first on Ptolemy's list) in B.C. 747, and our authorities inform us that it commenced on February 26. To determine whether this can be correct, we subtract 747 from 1,322, leaving 575, and this divided by 4 gives $143\frac{3}{4}$. Then $143\frac{3}{4}$ before July 20 will be February 26. A good diary or "Whitaker's Almanack" will show that July 20 in an ordinary year is the 201st day of the year. Taking $143\frac{3}{4}$ from 201 leaves $57\frac{1}{4}$, and the diary shows that this 57 is opposite February 26—Q.E.D. The fraction merely reminds us that February 26 is the first day of the three other years of the quadriennium, 746-7-8-9.

It is sometimes more convenient to calculate the month day of Thoth 1 from the end of the Cycle. Thus, Tiberius came to the throne in A.D. 14. Taking this 14 from the last year of the Cycle A.D. 139, we have 125, which divided by 4 gives $31\frac{1}{4}$, and 31 *added* to 201 makes 232. Opposite 232 in the diary is August 20. Historians tell us that Augustus died August 19, A.D. 14. Thus we learn that the first full day of the reign of Tiberius was an Egyptian New Year's Day.

The same method may be tried in the following instances from Ptolemy's Canon, as given in the "Ordo Sæclorum":*

	B.C.		Thoth I
Nabuchadnezzar	604	...	Jan. 21
Nabonadius	555	...	Jan. 9
Cyrus	538	...	Jan. 5
Cambyses	530	...	Jan. 3
Darius I.....	522	...	Jan. 1
Xerxes	486	...	Dec. 23
Artaxerxes I.....	465	...	Dec. 17

To these may be added the following cases that are not in the Canon:

Decree of Canopus	1 Payne ...	Oct. 22 ...	B.C. 238
Crucifixion (?)	1 Thoth ...	Aug. 16 ...	A.D. 29
Censorinus	1 Thoth ...	June 25 ...	A.D. 238

As the second line is of importance, it will be well to produce the evidence of its accuracy. Taking 29 from the end of the Cycle at A.D. 139 we find 110, which, divided by 4, makes $27\frac{1}{2}$. Adding this 27 to 201 we have 228, and this by the diary is August 16, A.D. 29—Q.E.D.

In the change ordered by Augustus a sixth Epact was added every fourth year, otherwise the 12 months still continued to consist of 30 days each.

* In some cases the Ordo is incorrect.

We have now perhaps sufficient material, with the assistance of Daniel's prophecy, to determine

The Date of Our Lord's Crucifixion.

One great difficulty has been to discover from which of the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes I, Daniel counted the years of his prophecy.

In Daniel the prophet, chapter ix, verse 24, we read: "Seventy Weeks are determined on thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions and to make an end of sins. . . ."

Verse 25. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven Weeks and three score and two Weeks. . . ."

Here we have 7, 60, 2 Weeks making in all 69 Weeks. These Weeks are usually understood of Weeks of years, not of days, and consequently amount in all to 483 years.

Verse 26. "And after (the) three score and two Weeks shall the Messiah be cut off. . . ."

Verse 27. "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for 1 Week." This Week completes the 70 spoken of at the beginning of the prophecy.

Verse 27. "And in the midst (middle) of the Week He shall cause the Sacrifice and the

Oblation to cease." This means of course that the daily Sacrifice and Oblation were to cease to be acceptable before God, owing to the accomplishment of what they foreshadowed by the Sacrifice on Mount Calvary.

Next, we have to discover from what point that is, from what date, and from what commandment or decree the prophecy is to be reckoned.

There are four distinct claims in the Bible that we have to consider, namely, one of Cyrus, one of Darius, and two of Artaxerxes.

In Ezra vi. 3, we read: "In the first year of Cyrus the King, the same Cyrus the King made a *decree* concerning the house of God at Jerusalem. Let the house be builded," etc. Now, we know that our Lord died after the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar (Luke iii, 1), that is, after A.D. 28. We have seen that the first year of Cyrus was B.C. 538 or 539, and 483 years after that date evidently do not take us to near the death or even the birth of Christ. Therefore, *that* decree cannot be the one intended by Daniel.

Again, Darius began, as we have already seen, his reign in B.C. 522 (or 521), whilst the English Bible gives B.C. 519 as the date of his decree (Ezra vi). This also is too early to suit the prophecy. Even if we suppose that the decree was published in the very last year of

his reign, B.C. 486 (or 485), this would place Christ's death before he was born.

Leaving for the present the first decree of Artaxerxes, let us proceed to his second attempt to settle the difficulties at Jerusalem, as given in Nehemiah ii, in the twentieth year of his reign. This is the year B.C. 445, and is taken by Bossuet as the true point from which the 483 years of the prophecy must be reckoned. He acknowledges, however, that it takes us some few years *after* the Crucifixion, and complains that no one had been able to explain the difficulty *(Histoire Universelle)*. Bossuet and the rest that have taken the twentieth year of Artaxerxes as the beginning of the time of the prophecy have not noticed that Nehemiah does not mention any decree, but only a number of letters given by the king. The year B.C. 445, then, is not the starting-point we require.

Let us now try the first arrangement of Artaxerxes for satisfying the Jews. He calls this distinctly a "decree" in Ezra vii, 12, 13, thus, "Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest . . . . I make a *decree* that all they of the people of Israel," and the rest.

And Ezra "came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king." Though nothing is said in the decree about the building of Jerusalem, this work is

certainly implied in that passage of Ezra vi. "And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of Cyrus, and of Darius, and of Artaxerxes, King of Persia."

In fact, these letters to the governors beyond the river and to the keeper of the king's forest were a kind of appendix to the "decree," granted to Ezra for the purpose of repairing the mischief that had since been done to the gates and walls of the Temple and city.

According to the list of kings given above from the Canon of Ptolemy, Artaxerxes came to the throne on Thoth 1, or December 17, B.C. 465. Clinton shows (*Epitome*, p. 238) that his accession took place in "the beginning of B.C. 464."

The fifth month of the seventh year, after an early month in B.C. 464, brings us to about the middle of B.C. 458.

The prophecy would then begin to run, as was usual in such cases, from the commencement of the civil year or Tisri 1 in the autumn.

Next, 490 years after that time brings us to the autumn of A.D. 33. This will be more easily seen by employing Roman years. From the Tables we learn that B.C. 458 is the same as U.C. 296, which, added to 490 years, give U.C. 786. The same Tables show that this corresponds with the year A.D. 33.

In the middle of the One Week "the Sacrifice and the Oblation" were to cease. The middle of the Week that ended in the Autumn of A.D. 33 was $3\frac{1}{2}$ years before that time, that is, in the Spring of A.D. 30.

According to Daniel, then, this was the date at which the Messiah was to be cut off "to bring in everlasting righteousness." In other words, he fixes the year and the quarter of the year in which our Lord was to be crucified.

Next, we have to discover, if possible, the month and the day of the Crucifixion. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200) gives what may perhaps answer our purpose. In his "Stromata," book I, ch. xxi, near the end, he tells us that some ancient writers had handed down the tradition that Christ died on the 25th of Phamenoth (the eighth month), that is on (7 times 30 plus 25) the 235th day of the Egyptian year. In the year A.D. 29, the Egyptian New Year's Day was, as we have seen, on August 16; and the 234th day after August 16, A.D. 29, will easily be found to be April 7, A.D. 30, which agrees with the Spring of the same year as required by the previous calculation.

This then must be the day of our Lord's crucifixion.

The author of the "Ordo Sæclorum" alludes to this tradition of Clement, but if he had

tried to utilize it he would probably have employed the fixed year of Augustus instead of the *annus vagus* of the ancient Egyptians, and thus would have failed to find the month and the day here proposed.

Many writers have attempted to discover the day of the Crucifixion by calculating astronomically the day of the Pasch, that is the 14th day of the right month in Spring. In doing this they have all taken for granted that the Jews determined the first day of *each* month by the actual appearance of the moon. Such a regulation would have kept nearly the whole of the Jewish year in a state of confusion and uncertainty. Secondly, the corn-seed of the bread that was to be waved in the Temple at the Pasch had to be sown 70 days before the Pasch. It would have been impossible to do this if such a law had been enforced. No; the actual observation of the moon took place more probably only at the beginning of the first civil month, Tisri, in the Autumn, and this must have settled all the subsequent months of the year. Possibly an experienced astronomer might discover the right day for the Pasch by keeping this in mind.

In trying to determine the 14th of the moon in the Spring it is easy to guess that the calculators might have reached a day very near the

true Pasch. Bengel, Wieseler and Caspari actually placed it on April 7, A.D. 30, the same day as suggested above, but made it the day both of the Crucifixion and of the Pasch. This caused others to reject it as absurd. To diminish the unreasonableness of this opinion Beza, Scaliger and Casaubon maintained that our Lord ate the Pasch on the right day, whilst the Jews, by some blunder, were a day too late. (See Ordo Sæclorum, p. 62.)

After all these centuries of experiments it is to be hoped that we have hit upon the right decision at last, and may honestly take for granted that Christ was crucified on April 7, A.D. 30.

The date B.C. 2782 will appear absurd to those who have always been taught that the Deluge occurred in B.C. 2348, more than 400 years after that time. The Egyptians, it was said, assured their Greek visitors that none of the ancient deluges ever reached their sacred soil. They would perhaps have agreed with those moderns who think that the enormous oceans of ice formed during the Ice Age caused a series of tremendous floods, which, however, never penetrated into the tropical regions. According to this theory, the Negroes of Africa and the Turanians of Asia are descended from the Antediluvians that never really disappeared.

RAMONA CONVENT

Curiously enough the ancient Parian Chronicle of the Greeks places the deluge of Deucalion in B.C. 1504, that is, at the beginning of the reign of Thothmes III, of the eighteenth dynasty (Hales' Chronology I, p. 121).

It was difficult to believe that the highest mountains were 15 cubits under water, as stated in Genesis vii, 20, till it was discovered that all the mountains of Wales were buried in ice during the Ice Age, except the top of Snowdon, and that the ice cap of Scotland was far thicker than that of Wales.

Rawlinson writes in his "History" (vol. I, ch. ix, p. 303): "Sirius rose heliacally in Egypt on the first of Thoth in the years B.C. 2782 and 1322, and again in A.D. 138 (?). This last-named year was certainly known to the Egyptians as the first of a Sothic cycle; the year B.C. 1322 was probably so known. Concerning the year B.C. 2782 we have no evidence." This does not agree with what we have seen above.

ART BOOK

233.38
B87
52922
Bulbeck, William Anthony
AUTHOR
The Date of the Crucifixion.
TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
	STORAGE - CBPL	

52922